

What is claimed is:

1. A retroreflective element having an exposed outer surface comprising optical elements and an interior cavity.

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2. The retroreflective element of claim 1 wherein the exposed outer surface consists of the viewing surface of preformed retroreflective sheeting.

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3. The retroreflective element of claim 2 wherein the retroreflective sheeting is selected from the group comprising exposed-lens sheeting and enclosed-lens sheeting.

4. The retroreflective elements of claim 2 wherein the retroreflective sheeting is exposed-lens sheeting comprising a specular reflective coating spaced apart from a monolayer of optical elements.

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5. The retroreflective element of claim 1 wherein the optical elements comprise glass microspheres, glass-ceramic microspheres, cube corner elements, and combinations thereof.

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6. The retroreflective element of claim 1 wherein the optical elements are at least partially embedded in a polymeric layer.

7. The pavement marking of claim 1 wherein the optical elements are selected from transparent microspheres, colored transparent microspheres, and microspheres having a specular reflecting coating.

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8. The retroreflective element of claim 1 wherein the cavity is discontinuous.

9. A retroreflective article comprising the retroreflective elements of claim 1 at least partially embedded in a binder.

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10. A surface comprising a plurality of the retroreflective elements of claim 1 partially embedded in a binder.

11. A retroreflective element having an exposed outer surface comprising optical elements and a discrete interior layer comprising optical elements.

12. A surface comprising a plurality of the retroreflective elements of claim 11 partially embedded in a binder.

13. The retroreflective element of claim 11 wherein the optical elements are provided by retroreflective sheeting.

14. A pavement marking comprising retroreflective elements partially embedded in a binder wherein the coefficient of retroreflected luminance is at least 2000 mcd/m²/lux when dry.

15. A pavement marking comprising retroreflective elements partially embedded in a binder wherein the coefficient of retroreflected luminance is at least 1500 mcd/m²/lux when wet.

16. A method of making retroreflective elements comprising:
providing an elongated member having a lengthwise surface; and
bonding retroreflective sheeting about the elongated member such that the lengthwise surface is substantially covered with the major viewing surface of the sheeting.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the elongated member is a core material.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the core material is a filament, a polymeric material, and combinations thereof.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein the elongated member is a tool.

20. The method of claim 16 wherein the retroreflective sheeting overlaps with itself.

21. The method of claim 16 further comprising cutting in a direction normal to the lengthwise surface forming discrete elements.